

# TERRORISM MONITOR

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## **Al-Qaeda's Next Generation**

By Sebastian Gorka

As the violent attacks in Iraq have multiplied, it is becoming evident that the moniker "al-Qaeda" has been unwisely overused, adding to the potentially dangerous misrepresentation that the U.S. and its allies are facing a monolithic and unitary foe responsible for all Islamist violence on the globe. In fact, responsibility for attacks across the world points toward a completely different analysis. Based upon information from a variety of European sources, including the German foreign intelligence agency, the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), Terrorism Monitor introduces the next generation of Osama bin Laden's network.

Generation One: Down but not out.

The majority of agencies and open-source analysts agree that the original organization that was al-Qaeda has been severely degraded as a result of the military operations in Afghanistan that disposed the Taleban regime. From the very first point at which bin Laden became involved in recruiting and training fighters to resist the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan to his usurpation of the Bureau of Services for Mujahideen and its transformation into the Base (al-Qaeda), bin Laden required a safe-haven in which to operate his headquarters. He needed a home to the many training bases that his guerillas (and then later, terrorists) would pass through. His migration from Pakistan to Sudan and

then to Afghanistan after 1989 testifies not only to his operational flexibility, but also to his need at every point to have a physical center for his organization.

While much has been made of the institutional and human weaknesses that led to the American security and intelligence failures prior to the 9/11 attack, it seems clear that the post-9/11 response has been to this point effective. Although bin Laden is still at large, six of the twenty-nine recognized top leaders of the original al-Qaeda structure are now dead and seven are in custody. The sheer fact that almost three years since the heinous hijackings, despite all its bluster and bin Laden's various pronouncements, the organization has been unable to execute an attack of similarly catastrophic proportions, speaks to the operational weakness of the network. However, investigations of the still significant but somewhat smaller-scale bombings in Bali and Madrid indicate that the tactical initiative has moved to new, younger groups of fundamentalist terrorists that are less strictly linked to the original cadre of mujahideen fighters.

Generations Two and Three: an even harder-core adversary?

Demographically and socially, the core membership of the original al-Qaeda network is made up of individuals in their 40s or 50s, people tied to one another by the common experience of having fought the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s. In fact, their link to this war imbues (or at least imbued) them with a distinct status amongst Muslim fundamentalists. This was a monolithic and unitary structure, which functioned very much on the basis of personal acquaintance, but which, over time, has become a catalyst for newer and currently less globally-capable regional groups. The first regional group that sprang from under the patronage of original Arab mujahideen fighters, the so-called Afghan Arabs, was associated with the fighting in Bosnia. Numerical estimates by the BND put the original group at approximately 30,000 operatives, with the second generation numbering slightly less at 20,000. Here it should be noted that the majority of terrorist arrests made on the territory of the European Union since 9/11 have involved individuals in their 30s, most of the suspects having combat experience from the Balkans, and Bosnia in particular.

In the last few months, an even newer sub-set of terrorists which could be identified with al-Qaeda, or which identifies itself with the broader aims of the original group, has emerged. These Islamists are in one way or another tied to the fighting in Chechnya, or to the former Soviet Republic of Georgia. Usually in their 20s, they are not linked by any particular campaign or by having trained together in one of the original al-Qaeda camps. Rather, these Islamists have shared experience at certain universities dotted across the Arab and Muslim world, universities that are home to the more virulent strains of the fundamentalist interpretations of Islam. Most often, these are establishments located in Pakistan. Very interestingly, in the case of some of the individuals that have been successfully identified or apprehended, these terrorists and potential terrorists are in fact the sons or sons-in-law of first generation members of the original al-Qaeda network. This is first and foremost an intellectual network, less reliant on the person-to-person contact so common to the original group. As a result, these cells have been found to be

even more autonomous than was previously posited. They represent a broad outer circle, far more diverse than the original al-Qaeda network.

## Aspects of the New al-Qaeda

The new generations of fundamentalist terrorists do not share the same group history as the ones the U.S. and its allies have been fighting most frequently since 9/11. The non-aligned nature of many of the new cells established in Europe and Austral-Asia, for example, have a more international identity, greater independence and looser structures. Almost all the 9/11 hijackers were of one nationality, Saudi Arabian. Today, however, law enforcement agencies are, more often than not, apprehending or learning of cells with an extremely heterogeneous make-up. Good examples of this are the group that attempted a gas attack on the Paris metro in 2003 and those responsible for the simultaneous bombings in March of the Madrid railway.

In fact, we now know that, contrary to the government line, the Hamburg cell which had provided logistical support to the 9/11 leader Mohamed Atta was not effectively dismantled after the attacks. Instead, it reconstituted itself in the months following in order to play a crucial role in the Madrid bombings more than two years later. Likewise, more and more cells have been unearthed, the members of which are from North Africa and Asia. This led one senior European intelligence specialist to state that: "It is not al-Qaeda that is the problem anymore. The next generation sees the original one as gone soft, or too vulnerable."

Furthermore, a pattern seems to be emerging in regards to how these new iterations have managed to sustain themselves. Training facilities have moved from Central Asia to Asia: particularly Indonesia (the Sulawesi region especially), the Philippines, Bangladesh and Nepal. And more often, it appears that operational planners have begun isolating specific Islamic centers, mosques or madrassas for operational targeting and recruiting. They take control of an existing facility, typically with the assistance of a radical Imam with a suitably fundamentalist or Salafi message, then turn this facility into a recruiting center for those that will be later sent to one of the new training camps. The creeping takeover of these centers reflects, in a methodological sense, the way in which the original Bureau of Services subsumed previously innocuous charities and organizations all over the globe before al-Qaeda was actually created.

## Conclusion

While the wider world now busily dissects the findings of the 9/11 Commission, it seems that many of the recommendations touted as new and innovative responses to al-Qaeda may in fact already be out-of-date. Policymakers and practitioners will need to invent new tools to address the reality that the target has moved. We have effectively disabled the original organization, at least for the time being. However, the truth may be that, we are on the verge of witnessing the eruption of many more diverse groups on the world stage, groups which are less restricted by geographical and national ties than were their patrons.

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## A New Journal for Algerian Jihad

By Stephen Ulph

At a period of uncertainty and fragmentation for the Salafist movement in Algeria, a new publication has made its appearance on the internet. In May, the first issue of *Al-Jama'a* (The Group) was posted on the website of the *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (GSPD). [1] The journal is in imitation of eastern models such as Al-Qaeda's online magazines for the jihad in the Arabian Peninsula, *Sawt al-Jihad* (Voice of Jihad) and *Mu'askar al-Battar* (The Al-Battar Military Camp) ? indeed the similarity of the production style and standard immediately calls to mind these eastern forerunners. That there should be editorial links is, of course, unsurprising, given the history of the foundation of the GSPD, and the close links maintained between these groups. Edition 6 of *Sawt al-Jihad* excerpts an article on the Algerian Jihad urging its readers to draw lessons in the Arabian Peninsula from the experience of their mujahideen in the West:

We should learn from the example of Algeria, that democracy is a fiction?designed to distract the energies of vigorous youth?Algeria teaches us that the peaceful solution is a deficient one?and teaches us that hastiness for results causes reverses, and that progressing too soon from guerrilla warfare is a lethal mistake. [2]

The 38-page long *Al-Jama'a* describes itself as a "periodical magazine on Algerian jihad affairs" and comes:

Amid such decisive moments in the history of the Nation, to present one of the vanguards of Jihad, one of the fighting outposts that is still, after 12 years, raising the standard of Monotheism and Jihad atop the heights of Muslim Algeria. [3]

The tone of the publication can be gauged by the essay *Take up the Weapon for Life*:

From Afghanistan comes the kernel of the Nation; it was the beginning?proud Iraq was not the end?for those infidels and the apostate agents in our lands there are not enough graves?it is high time that Rome had its Cross uprooted and the city decked out for the arrival of the new conquerors, passing through Al-Andalus [4] and the Pavement of the Martyrs [5], and Vienna [6] and Constantinople, to which we are yet drawn by a longing that grows in our breasts day by day. For our Prophet (who does not lie when he speaks, being the most truthful of speakers) did promise: "God hath set aside for me the world, and I beheld its east and

western lands, and the dominion of my Nation shall reach unto that which was set aside for me." [7]

Unlike its sister publications in the Arabian Peninsula, *Al-Jama'a*, at least for this first edition, is short on specifics, and long on generic homilies on jihad. A lot of space is taken up with issues of legitimizing the current leadership. Having recently undergone some seismic shocks with the deposition of Hassan al-Hattab (later rumored to have been executed by his former colleagues), the GSPD journal devoted seven pages of dense print to *Questions on Legitimacy*, outlining the background to the deposition of Hattab and the legal support for the leadership of Abu Ibrahim Mustafa. Documentation on his election is included, along with an extended interview with him, introducing his views and his curriculum vitae. [8]

As part of its stated purpose "to remove confusion and clarify the facts," the magazine's intention appears to be to serve as much as a morale booster as a communications vehicle.

Each of those who follow the rolling march of ponderous events, notwithstanding all the heavy costs, heavy sacrifices made in blood and limbs and pain, now may deservedly declare in resounding, optimistic shout: "Hold fast, O Mujahideen! Be patient O Murabitin! And hold to the blessed path, for signs of the coming victory are already on the distant horizon!" [9]

Abu Ibrahim Mustafa, himself, outlines the reasons for the GSPD's refusal to accept the amnesty in *Denial Communiqué*. Mustafa also contributed three other essays to the publication: *Islam's Alienation, A Discussion*, and *Election Communiqué* (dated 18th Jumada II 1424). Among the other essays included in this addition is *The Fountain Pen? and the Bullet Word* by Abu al-Hasan Gharib: a generic, exhortative discussion on the aims of the Jihad in Algeria. A page of uplifting quotes from Sayyid Qutb [10] entitled *Al-Jama'a Recreation* rounds out the issue. The concluding section, *Final Word*, is a request to distribute copies of *Al-Jama'a* and a direction to look out for the next edition.

The one element of the *Al-Jama'a* dealing with contemporary events, and which is clearly the source of some anxiety, concerns the government amnesty and the potentially demoralising effects of claimed negotiations in progress for the surrender of some 300 GSPD members. Under the rubric *Viewpoint on Events*, *Al-Jama'a* devotes five pages to the GSPD's rejectionist position, and is at pains to deny that there has been any substantial take-up of it by the militant group's members. The essay *Storm in a Teacup - Standpoints on the So-called Heathen Truce* pours scorn on the Algerian media reports:

It appears that peoples' mental simplicity has sunk to its lowest this year in Algeria, and I do not know how to describe the rumours concerning communications with the Salafist Group, "the impending group surrender of the Mujahideen (God forgive them)" and "ongoing talks with some of the leadership of the Mujahideen" and other such like various headlines

which make me almost pass out merely to think of them. I don't know how to describe them other than that they are a Storm in a Teacup." [11]

The mujahideen, the author insists, are steadfast. The author points to how the red map of jihad is now enveloping the Muslim world, and that, therefore, there is no room or need for truces with the "Tyrants":

We say: relax, use your head and have faith in the victory of God, for indeed atop the Auras mountains and the hills of Kabylie and the southern Sahara there are still many who despise the Jews and the Christians and their dogs, such as Bouteflika and Lamari [12]?

Despite the disillusionments and the many infiltrations and plots? they did not consider even for a moment to sell their Jihad for a base price? they discarded [the efforts of peace doves] like the stone from a fruit, and shunned it like some pollutant that would defile the purity of their Jihad.

The author reserves his highest scorn for members of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), who have entered into negotiations with the Algerian government and announced their participation in the political process.

So what sort of Algerian crisis is this that they wish to resolve? The true crisis which the Islamic nation has fallen into since the fall of the Caliphate is the abandonment of Jihad and the replacement of brigades and *razzias* with ballot boxes, "parties" and "elections."

What shocks us to the core, O "Men of Salvation" is that your brothers are besieged by the enemy while you are eating and drinking and enjoying the pleasures of life. Indeed, some of you the while have made things worse by whole-heartedly collaborating with that dwarf Bouteflika and have given legitimacy to his election. Do you not have any feelings left in your soul? God knows that I wish to write these words and shout at the top of my voice: "Help me O mountains, and save me O stones, since the men of 'Salvation' have lost their manliness!"

Given the advances made by the Algerian military in the war against the insurgency, the publication of the *Al-Jama'a* magazine would seem to parallel the publication of Al-Qaeda's *Mu'askar al-Battar* and *Sawt al-Arab* magazines? that is, the construction of a virtual arena for training and indoctrination following the loss of the territorial arenas in Afghanistan. Its fantastic, apocalyptic tone also parallels the peninsular publications:

You shall see, God permitting, the *Place des Martyrs* in the capital [Algiers] turn into a fearful arena of massacres for you after we have finished slapping your face and kicking your backside. "And in that day the Believers will rejoice in Allah's help to victory." [13]

However, just the one edition of *Al-Jama'a* has been published to date. Two months having passed since its appearance on the web, it will be interesting to see whether this

will remain the only issue, now that the leader of the GSPD, Nabil Sahrawi (Abu Ibrahim Mustafa), has been killed. Given the resilience of its sister productions in Saudi Arabia, which have continued to publish even after the killing of ?Abd al-?Aziz bin Muqrin and the raiding of its publishing base at the end of June, it is possible that *Al-Jama'a* will reappear after the group has had time to reorganise.

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Notes:

1. First issue: Rabi' al-Thani 1425 (May 2004). The *al-Jama'a* web magazine can be found on the GSPD's website at <http://www.jihad-algeria.com>.
2. The excerpt is from Abu ?Abdallah al-Sa'di's *Abatil wa-Asmar* (?Myths and Idle Prattle'), pp.11-12.
3. Editorial comment, p.2.
4. The historical Islamic term for Spain, preserved in the present day province of Andalucía. The author is recalling ?unfinished work.'
5. *Balat al-Shuhada*: the village near Tours in France where the Muslim conquerors led by Abd al-Rahman al-Ghafiqi were halted by the Merovingian Charles Martel in 732 AD, marking the furthest point of Muslim expansion in western Europe.
6. The Ottoman army was halted at the gates of Vienna in 1683, marking the high-water mark of Islam in eastern Europe.
7. *Al-Jama'a*, p.12.
8. August 17th 2003. The *Bayan Tansib* appears on p.28.
9. Editorial comment, p.2.
10. Sayyid Qutb, 1906-1966, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, was a prominent Islamist (revivalist) figure and was one of the chief ideologues of the modern jihadist movement.
11. Article *Zawba'a fi Finjan*, by Salah Abu Muhammad, *Al-Jama'a*, p.7.
12. Chief of Staff, Lieutenant General Mohammed Lamari, the *eminence grise* of the Algerian military, who has declared victory in the war against Islamist insurgents.
13. *Al-Jama'a*, p.9. Concluding quotation: *Qur'an*, XXX, 4,5.

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